



■ EVALUATION

During the field training process, trainees must be guided, directed, and apprised of their progress through verbal and written feedback and evaluations. This guide provides several samples of written evaluations including Daily Observation Reports (DORs), Supervisor Weekly Reports (SWRs), and End of Phase Reports (EPRs); and alternatively, Daily Training Notes, Weekly Progress Reports, and Phase Evaluation Reports (Appendices I-VII). A department's choice of forms is not nearly as crucial as the actual feedback process and content of the evaluations. Evaluations must be consistent, objective, and administered in a manner that promotes good performance and progress throughout the program. The performance objectives in the field training manual, the judgment used by the trainee, and the skills, knowledge, and competency demonstrated in performing the job-related duties of a uniformed patrol officer will serve as the basis for these evaluations.

The Process

Each trainee shall be evaluated in a number of categories which, when taken together, reflect the totality of the job for which the trainee was hired (this guide is designed to reflect general law enforcement uniformed patrol duties but could be modified to many other law enforcement jobs such as dispatching, custody, etc.). When possible, these categories should be rooted in a *Job Task Analysis* that has been completed specifically for the department. *Job Task Analysis* is the process of obtaining information about a job, and its requirements, in order to determine the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that are required for satisfactory performance of the job in question. If the department has not completed a job task analysis specific to its uniformed patrol officer position, the department should utilize the job task analysis information collected by POST or utilize categories developed by a similar type of department. Research by POST and other law enforcement agencies has indicated that the key job task elements (competencies) for the patrol officer position are similar throughout the nation.

The evaluation procedure should be based on the behavioral anchor approach, which uses Behavior Anchored Ratings (BARs). Once the relevant job-related

categories have been determined, the *what* to be evaluated has been identified. *How* to rate these categories now becomes the issue. *How* is based upon the employee's performance as measured against the department's standards. Most departments use Standardized Evaluation Guidelines (SEGs). The SEGs have been established to ensure each FTO's rating of a trainee will be equal and standard throughout the program. They are designed to provide a definition, in behavioral terms, of various levels of performance. The SEGs (or whatever accepted standard is established by the department) must be applied equally to all trainees, regardless of their experience, time in the program, or other incidental factors. Departments using a DOR should provide SEGs for every category listed on the face sheet of the DOR. Departments using Daily Training Notes and Weekly Progress Reports should provide a clear evaluation "scale."

Beause law enforcement has a wide variety of techniques and procedures, it becomes extremely important that standardization of performance appraisal occurs. *Proper* evaluation without standardization is not possible. In order to promote standardization of the evaluation process within each department, there is a need to articulate and document reference points. These reference points need to explain the rationale supporting the scores used by each department, such as "1" (Unacceptable), "4" (Acceptable), "7" (Superior), "NI" (Needs Improvement), "C" (Competent), etc.

SEGs, evaluation "scales," and the explanations for Unacceptable, Acceptable, Superior, Needs Improvement, and Competent may be modified to reflect the operational standards for any given department. The SEGs, evaluation "scales," and such found in this guide may need to be modified to accurately reflect the levels of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes in a particular department. Likewise, the categories listed on the Daily Observation Reports or Weekly Training Progress Reports may also be modified to reflect the "job". For example, if a department requires that each officer be trained as an EMT, that category and the relevant guidelines should be included. The categories selected for rating should: (1) cover the totality of what an employee is required to do, and (2) be anchored in behaviorally descriptive terms.

Rating Behavior/Performance

A written department standard or "scale" should accompany each category evaluated on the DOR or Weekly Training Progress Reports. Most departments use the "San Jose Model" which utilizes a 7-point rating scale, while others utilize another point variation scale (a 3,4, or 5-point) or alphabetic scales ("NI" - needs improvement, "C" - competent, etc.). Whatever rating scale a department chooses, all trainees should be evaluated throughout the entire program utilizing the solo patrol officer standard as "acceptable" or "competent."

The FTO's role is to examine the trainee's performance and choose the appropriate description as provided in the relevant SEG or evaluation scale. The FTO selects the description that "fits" the behavior that they are evaluating; i.e., 1, 4, 7, "NI," or "C" anchor. Performance, however, does not always "fit" into the nice, neat rating box. A trainee's performance may be somewhat better or worse than the rating descriptor. In these cases, where behavior is not "anchored" by the appropriate description, the FTO must select the score.

For example, in the 7-point rating scale there are behavioral descriptions found only at numbers "1", "4", and "7." In the case of report writing, the "1" rating states the trainee takes three or more times the amount of time an experienced officer takes to complete a report. If the trainee takes perhaps only 2 times the amount of time, the FTO may choose to give him/her a "2" rating and/or if the trainee shows steady improvement to being able to complete a report in only about 15-20 minutes beyond the amount of time an experienced officer would take to complete the report, a "3" might be the appropriate rating. Even if FTOs have different opinions as to when to rate a behavior or performance a "2" or a "3", the bottom line is that both ratings indicate a less than acceptable (competent) performance. The same logic would follow for "5" or "6" ratings as well.

Although this may appear subjective, most FTOs who have completed a POST-certified Field Training Officer Course will select one score over another because they are; 1) familiar with the job, 2) have been trained to know what is expected within their program, and 3) have the best perception of the trainee's performance that day as well as his/her progress (or lack thereof) within the program.

The most difficult part of the evaluation process for FTOs is to surrender their own opinions of what the trainee's performance *should* be. FTOs **MUST** rate the trainee pursuant to the language in the guidelines if the trainee's performance is consistent with the language of that guideline. **FTOs shall have no discretion in this matter.** It is the only way that objective evaluations will be accomplished. If each evaluator (FTO) uses the same measuring device (SEGs), you should see the same results, the same scores.

Common Performance Evaluation Errors

If the objectivity of the evaluation process is called into question, it is most likely because one or more FTOs did not follow the guidelines or standards established by the department. It may be that one or more of the following "errors" entered into the evaluation process.

The **ERROR OF LENIENCY** occurs when the FTO assigns scores beyond those that are deserved. In a field training program, this often occurs because the FTO introduces the variable of "experience" or the amount of time the trainee has spent in the program. In other words, the FTO recognizes the performance as less than adequate but considers it "OK" given the amount of experience the trainee has had. The same performance, seen several weeks later, may result in the awarding of an "Unacceptable" score. If the performance does not change, the score should remain the same regardless of how long the employee has been in the program. Remember... **Whatever rating scale a department chooses, all trainees should be evaluated throughout the entire program utilizing the solo patrol officer standard as "acceptable" or "competent."**

The **ERROR OF PERSONAL BIAS** (also called the "Halo" or "Horns" effect) occurs when the FTO allows personal feelings about the employee to affect the ratings. Particular "likes" or "dislikes" limit appraisal objectivity. What is rated in the field training program is whether or not an individual can safely, effectively, and competently do the job as described...that's all!

The **ERROR OF CENTRAL TENDENCY** is seen when the FTO routinely "bunches" scores toward the center of the rating scale. This error is often present in field training programs when departments using the numeric scale require written comments for scores of 1, 2, 6, and 7. Some FTOs, not wishing to take the time to document, will assign scores of 3, 4, or 5 routinely to avoid the "mandatory" reporting rule. Central tendency errors also occur when the FTO does not give close attention to performance and, to be on the "safe side," or to avoid any controversy, rates in the middle of the scale. Many departments using the numeric scale require only that scores of "1" and "7" be documented which allows for more latitude in the scoring.

The **ERROR OF RELATED TRAITS** happens when the FTO gives the same rating to traits that he/she considers related in some way. The value of rating each trait separately is lost and the overall rating loses specificity.

The **ERROR OF EVENT BIAS** comes into play when one or two traits (or a particular behavior) dominate the appraisal. The FTO may evaluate all remaining traits based on the dominant trait or performance. An outstanding bit of work or a severe mistake, not treated as an individual occurrence, may bring about the "Halo" or "Horns" effect.

"NO ROOKIE EVER GETS A 7" (or Exceeds Standards, Superior, etc) is a belief too often expressed. The SEGs and rating descriptions should be based on real life experiences and should not reflect artificial standards. While it may be difficult for many trainees to perform at a "Superior" level in a number of

categories, that score could be attainable for some. There is no place for unrealistic expectations/goals in a job-related performance evaluation system.

The **ERROR OF "ROOM TO GROW"** occurs when the FTO, wanting to "motivate" the trainee to work harder, assigns a score less than what the trainee deserves. When a trainee fails to get the recognition that he/she deserves, there may be a loss, rather than a gain, in terms of motivation.

The **ERROR OF AVERAGING SCORES.** FTOs who assign a score based on an average of the trainee's performance for the day have selected a score that is not accurate. For example, a trainee, stopping at thirty or more traffic lights during the day, goes through one without stopping. Some will say that "on the average" the trainee obeys traffic signals and an acceptable rating is given. It is not acceptable to go through a red light but the score suggests to the trainee that it is "OK." Additionally, no one will know what the trainee did unless the FTO includes a written comment about the fault.

FTOs are often uncomfortable about giving an "Unacceptable" rating when a trainee has performed well in an area throughout the day with one or two exceptions. Objective evaluation requires that the FTO acknowledge the mistake(s) by assigning a score *less than* "Acceptable." The FTO **must** give the trainee an "Unacceptable" rating in an area regardless of how minor or infrequent the mistake(s) when weighed against the trainee's otherwise good performance. The FTO will mediate any hard feelings on the part of the trainee by adding documentation that acknowledges the good performance as well as the mistake.

Finally, there are other errors that trainers must guard against. These are biases that have a tendency to influence us when rating the performance of another. Taking into account a trainee's standing in the academy class; relationship to another member of the department; the presence or absence of educational achievement; age, gender, race or sexual orientation; physical appearance; etc., are only a few of a person's characteristics that dilute objectivity. Performance-related evaluations tend to be more objective and to center on *what* the individual does rather than *who* the individual is. Employees want their performance, not their personality, discussed during a performance review. In this way, defensiveness on the part of the trainee will diminish, and the FTO will be able to avoid these common appraisal errors.

The only measure that FTOs should use when evaluating the behavior and performance of a trainee is the department's Standardized Evaluation Guidelines or Evaluation "Scale."

Evaluation Comments/Narratives/Documentation

To make the most effective use of the narrative portions of written evaluations, it is important for the FTO to remember four "goals" of documentation. To provide meaningful evaluation, the documentation should be:

- 1. CLEAR
- CONCISE
- 3. COMPLETE
- 4. CORRECT

Ten Steps How to Achieve the Four Goals

The following suggestions will support the FTO in accomplishing the documentation goals.

1. Set the stage.

Provide a description of the situation or conditions that are present when the trainee performs. This will allow the reader to more fully understand what occurred.

Example: The trainee, using excellent defensive driving techniques, brought an 80 mph, high-speed chase to a successful halt.

2. Use verbatim quotes.

It is sometimes clearer to report <u>what was said</u> rather than attempt to describe the effect of the words.

Example: The trainee, when logging an arrestee's property and finding \$535 in his wallet, remarked, "Where does a low life jerk like you get this much money?" This angered the arrestee and resulted in a physical confrontation.

3. Report the facts — avoid conclusions.

Report what occurred. Do not include your interpretation of why something occurred. In the example below, there are several possible reasons why the trainee is not making the traffic stops other than a lack of motivation or confidence.

Example: The trainee lacks motivation or confidence. Despite training in vehicle violation stops, the trainee, although admitting that he saw the violation, had to be told to make these stops on five separate occasions.

4. Remember your audience.

When writing your evaluation(s), consider who may be reading the report. In addition to the trainee, your report may be read by your supervisor, department head, an attorney representing your depart-

ment or the trainee, an arbitrator, or judge. These readers will form opinions of your abilities based on what they read.

5. Watch your grammar, spelling, and legibility. Avoid slang, jargon, and swearing.

Not everyone who will be reading your evaluation(s) understands radio codes and penal code sections. Explain any code sections used. Be professional and model your expectations.

6. Speak to performance, not personality.

Criticize the act, not the person. Criticizing the person brings about defensiveness. While more difficult to do in written vs. verbal form, the "Impersonal" style of documentation relieves some of the stress.

Example: Rather than write "You did a poor job of handling the disturbance call..." try "Trainee Jones did a poor job of handling...," etc.

7. Use lists, if appropriate.

The use of a "list" approach will sometimes save time and space. *Example: The trainee, when asked, failed to accurately identify the following ten code definitions: 10-7, 10-8, 10-16, 10-27, 10-28, 10-29, 10-35, and 10-62.*

8. Think remedial.

What has been tried? How did it work? What will you try next? Document your training plans and the results thereof.

9. Use quantification whenever possible.

Quantification or the documentation of a standard that is familiar to every reader adds clarity to the documentation.

Example: It took Bill five tries to successfully complete a burglary report. See attached.

10. Do not predict.

Avoid statements such as "I am sure that Ann, with a little more effort, will be able to master the radio," or "Charlie's skills will no doubt improve as the weeks go by." Rather than make statements of this nature, the FTO should write what the behavior should produce; i.e., "When Bill can complete reports of this nature within 30 minutes or less, he will be performing at an acceptable level." Predictions set up false expectations.

If FTOs can write acceptable reports, they should be able to write acceptable evaluation narratives. One way to keep documentation of this type in perspective is to write as though telling a story to a close friend or co-worker who was

not present when the behavior was observed. Would all the details be included or just generalities? When in doubt, reread what's written and ask if you REALLY know what happened from what was written. Another approach is to have another FTO or supervisor read the narrative. Do they have any questions? If so, the documentation may need more work.

Discussing Evaluations

The FTO and trainee's discussion of evaluations is a particularly important aspect of the field training program. Merely completing the evaluation and having the trainee sign it will not achieve the objectives of a proper evaluation.

The performance evaluation must:

- Be understood by the trainee. This does not mean the trainee has to be in agreement with the entire evaluation, just that he/she understands it.
- 2. Be the basis for plans to help the trainee improve performance as needed.
- 3. Give the trainee recognition for strong points and acceptable performance as well as call attention to weak areas and/or deficient performance.

FTOs should allow ample time to discuss evaluations with trainees. Discussions should be held where privacy can be maintained with little or no interruptions. These discussions should be a "two-way conversation." Trainees should be encouraged to express how they feel. Trainees should be encouraged to be more self-aware and perhaps, even be given a chance for self-evaluation.

FTOs should listen to what the trainees have to say and not show disapproval when they do respond to the evaluation. FTOs should re-emphasize that performance is being discussed and not a defense of the evaluation.

Once a discussion has been completed, the FTO should ensure that the trainee signs the evaluation and has the opportunity to provide written comments or speak with the FTP SAC if desired. ■

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION DOCUMENTS

Daily Observation Report

The Daily Observation Report (DOR) is to be completed by the FTO at the end of each shift that the trainee is assigned to work during the field training program. Days where the trainee receives no evaluation by a qualified FTO (i.e., Orientation, days off sick or injured, non-enforcement or special assignments, etc.) can also be documented on the DOR. Only the headings and narrative portions should be completed for those shifts. The DOR is used to record the trainee's performance, specific training or instruction presented, and any other information of importance related to the trainee's activities in the training program that day.

This report is the permanent record of the trainee's progress in terms of performance, skills, knowledge, the improvements needed, and the FTO's efforts to bring about change. It is the principle document used for determining the trainee's status in the program.

The form shall be completed at or near the end of each shift and reviewed with the trainee unless unusual circumstances exist. It is important that this feedback be shared with the trainee as close to the events documented so that he/she can have the benefit of utilizing the feedback in advance of the next call for service and/or shift

The DOR is designed to rate observed behavior with reference to either a numerical or alphabetic scale (i.e., 1,4, and 7 or NI and C). The form lists specific categories of behavior (i.e., officer safety, driving skill, appearance, etc.). Each category must be rated or an indication made that the performance was "not observed" (N.O.) during the shift covered by that DOR. Circling or marking the appropriate number or letter records the numeric or alphabetic rating based on the Standardized Evaluation Guideline for each category. Ratings such as Unacceptable, Below Standard, Far Exceeds Standards, and/or Superior should be explained on the reverse side of the form.

Some DORs have a "N.R.T." box on the face of the form. "N.R.T." means "Not Responding to Training." In addition to a numerical rating in the particular category, this box may also be marked or the N.R.T. box alone may be marked. N.R.T. is assigned after reasonable remedial efforts have failed to result in improvement. Citing N.R.T. is a serious step and is considered a "red flag" for the trainee and the FTP SAC. From this point, if improvement is not made, termination may result. It is expected there will be significant documentation about the problem before this step is taken. The decision to assign N.R.T. is somewhat subjective but one that can be reasonably justified. The FTO must first get a sense of the difficulty of the task. Is it an easy task or one that is rather difficult to learn? Once the difficulty or complexity is known, the FTO then must get an idea of how many tries the trainee has had at task completion. This process is a search for the presence or absence of balance (i.e., Has the trainee had enough opportunities to effectively complete the task given the difficulty?). If the answer is "Yes," N.R.T. is appropriate. If "No," continue with remediation.

Note→

We must be sure that any remediation that has been given is perceived as that likely to bring about the desired change. The <u>quantity and quality</u> of remediation will be examined to ensure that the strategies employed would likely lead to improvement.

The "R.T." found on some DORs refers to remedial training or the time spent by the FTO in the correction or review of previously taught information or procedures. When 15 minutes (some departments use a 10-minute standard) or more is spent in any one category, the FTO shall record the number of minutes in the appropriate box. If the FTO spends less than 15 minutes in the task area, a "check" or "X" is sufficient. More information on remedial training and strategies begins on Page II-15.

Some DORs have a Daily Score ("D.S.") box on the left side of the face of the form. This column of boxes can serve several purposes. Most often after the FTO has reviewed the DOR with the trainee, the trainee should transfer (write) each score from the rating scale into the box in this column. This practice serves to reinforce how the trainee performed on that day. Secondly, these scores can later be transferred to a chart reflecting rated performance over a period of time. The tracking of these scores produces a picture of improvement or lack thereof. A chart of this type can also be used by the FTP SAC to identify potential inconsistencies in individual FTO ratings.

The reverse side of the DOR is designed for narrative comments. Both negative and positive performance should be noted by the FTO. Steps taken to assist trainees in improving their performance should also be noted here.

All DORs are to be signed and dated by both the trainee and the FTO. In some departments the FTP SAC may also sign these forms. The FTP SAC must monitor the trainee's progress through the review and signing of these DORs and/or through the completion of a Supervisor's Weekly Report (SWR). Sample DORs with the supplementary SEGs can be found in Appendices I and II.

Daily Training Notes

Some departments may choose the Daily Training Notes/Weekly Training Progress Reports documentation method. Like DORs, Daily Training Notes are invaluable in providing immediate feedback to a trainee on his/her performance. FTO notes should be made as soon as possible after incidents occur. The notes should be verbally reviewed with the trainee and he/she should also be allowed to review the notes. The written comments should be used as the primary basis for the Weekly Training Progress Reports that the FTO is required to prepare during the training program. Each important incident and response must be addressed and noted in order to give the trainee direction to continue good performance or improve poor performance. FTOs should note whatever steps are taken to assist the trainee in improving his/her performance. Sample Daily Training Notes can be found in Appendix III.

Weekly Training Progress Reports

Departments using Daily Training Notes will have FTOs complete Weekly Training Progress Reports. These progress reports are completed at the end of each week of the training program. They are designed to match the objectives covered during that week and augment the daily training notes. Specific comments concerning performance below an acceptable level should be articulated in the Daily Training Notes for justification.

Rating Levels Training Progress Evaluation Scale

Performance in each evaluation category is rated between 1 and 4 indicating the trainee's performance during the week. The specific meaning of each number can be found in the breakdown listed below:

- **4 BETTER THAN ACCEPTABLE:** Performance exceeds the agency's standard
- **3 ACCEPTABLE:** Performance meets the agency's standard
- **2 IMPROVEMENT IS NEEDED:** Performance is progressing toward acceptable but does not yet meet the agency's standard
- **1 UNACCEPTABLE:** Performance is not at an acceptable level
- **N.R.T. NOT RESPONDING TO TRAINING:** Trainee has been rated at level 1 or 2 and, after remediation, shows no improvement

Performance Descriptions

"Better than Acceptable." A trainee who performs significantly above that which is expected and above the standard of the agency.

"Acceptable." Given when the performance satisfies the required standard. It is interpreted as the training progress is satisfactory and the trainee should at least maintain that level of performance. Every effort should be made to encourage the trainee to strive for improved performance that would be recognized in future Training Progress Reports and to guide him/her to the fullest development of his/her capacities.

"Some Improvement Needed." Notifies the trainee that his/her performance is deficient. It is intended to stimulate the trainee to improve and maintain a higher level of work performance. Usually, it also means that the FTO must devote additional attention to assisting the trainee in making the needed improvement. The special attention may take the form of greatly increased effort, special training, or a remedial training plan.

"Unacceptable." Indicates that performance is significantly below the expectation of standard work performance. The trainee, with the assistance of his/her FTO, must make every effort to improve competence in that category.

"N.R.T." Comment (Not Responding to Training). A trainee who has been rated at Level 1 or 2, and after remediation shows no improvement in performance, should be notified that he/she is "NRT." This comment should alert the trainee and training staff that there is a continuing problem. It notifies the trainee that the need for improvement is so great that the trainee's continued stay in the program is in jeopardy.

The specific standard for each of the rating levels in a Weekly Training Progress Report will be determined by a department's own standards. A sample Weekly Training Progress Report can be found in Appendix IV.

Supervisor's Weekly Report

In an effort to ensure accountability, supervision, and participation from a higher level within the department, some departments may require the FTP SAC to complete an evaluation of the trainee's performance and progress each week. The evaluation will be completed and administered to the trainee by the FTP SAC. This report is useful not only to report a trainee's performance but also to serve as a check and balance of the FTO's evaluation of the trainee.

The Supervisor's Weekly Report (SWR) contains a sentence in which the supervisor advises the trainee that his/her performance for that week was either "acceptable" or "unacceptable." The FTP SAC will also advise the

trainee as to the level of his/her overall performance at that point in the program. This report provides additional feedback to the trainee and an opportunity for the trainee to discuss other training issues with a supervisor, if needed. The SWR should be signed and dated by both the trainee and the FTP SAC. A sample SWR can be found in Appendix V.

End of Phase Report

Departments using DORs and phase training will have FTOs complete an End of Phase Report (EPR). EPRs detail the trainee's significant strengths and weaknesses, as well as list specific training provided during the phase. The EPRs also list recommendations for training needed by the trainee during the next phase of instruction.

In this report, FTOs will indicate their judgment as to the actual level of performance demonstrated by the trainee. The EPR should be discussed in a field training staff meeting with the FTP SAC, the trainee's current FTO, and the trainee's next FTO. Special training problems should be clarified and addressed with the development of a specific training regimen for the next phase of instruction. The EPR should be signed and dated by the trainee, the FTO, and the FTP SAC. A sample EPR can be found in Appendix VI.

Phase Evaluation Report

Departments using Daily Training Notes and Weekly Training Progress Reports will have FTOs complete a Phase Evaluation Report. These are formatted similarly to the Weekly Training Progress Reports but must include all of the objectives that were covered from the previous weeks.

It must also address the judgment displayed in performing the objectives, the skills demonstrated in conducting preliminary investigations, preparing reports, performing self-initiated activity, and the acceptability of personal characteristics such as personal relations and dependability. Objectives that were carried over from a previous evaluation period because they were not acceptably performed, or are not currently being performed at an acceptable level, should also be included.

The Phase Evaluation Report should not contain any reference to an incident that was not part of the Daily Training Notes or has not been reviewed with the trainee. A sample Phase Evaluation Report can be found in Appendix VII, while a completed sample is in Appendix XX.

Completion Record/Competency Attestation

Upon the trainee's successful completion of the field training program, it will be the responsibility of the Final Phase FTO to complete a competency attestation of the trainee's ability to perform the duties of a solo patrol officer.

After assuring that all the materials from the field training program guide have been covered and signed off, and after personally observing the trainee's acceptable performance in **all** of the functional areas or categories, the FTO will initiate a Completion Record/Competency Attestation form to be routed through the chain of command. The form should be signed and dated by the trainee, the Final Phase FTO, the FTP SAC, and the department head (or his/her designee). This form should become a permanent part of the trainee's training record. A sample Completion Record/Competency Attestation form can be found in Appendix XI.

REMEDIAL TRAINING STRATEGIES

Most FTOs will report that training is an "ongoing" process that is the result of the natural interactions between themselves and the trainee. Simple comments such as "keep your gun hand clear" or "this word is spelled..." often take place simultaneously to the observed mistake. Some training may have to take place at another time or location away from the actual event. What is important to remember is that; 1) a mistake or performance deficiency **must** be corrected, and 2) that correction should come as **soon** as practical after the behavior without interfering with the department's service responsibilities. Most performance mistakes are relatively simple to fix and are corrected almost immediately. The problems that do not seem to go away, or are repeated, call for a more formal approach known as remedial training.

Remedial training is defined as: A correction or review of previously taught information or procedures. "Previously taught" should not include any training that the trainee may have received in the Regular Basic Course (Academy). Remedial training becomes necessary when the trainee's job performance is evaluated as less than acceptable after having been provided with sufficient training or intervention that should have corrected and improved the job performance.

While the FTO's role is to help the trainee overcome performance deficiencies and give him/her every opportunity to learn and perform, some performance deficiencies have as their root cause something that the FTO cannot correct. Examples might be immaturity, absence of a positive self-image, lack of common sense and worldliness, lack of life experience, stress, and fear. These are attitudinal based and are occasionally so deeply ingrained in the trainee's behavioral package that they cannot be overcome. It would be wrong to automatically assume that a failure to perform well is linked to one of these reasons. It is more likely that inexperience and an absence of sufficient practice has led to the problem. Remedial training should begin as soon as the ongoing deficiency is noted.

Since formal remedial training may require an extended stay in the field training program, there are several steps the FTO can take when trying to resolve the deficiency:

- 1. Being as specific as possible, identify and describe the deficiency. Do not overlook calling upon the trainee to help in this endeavor.
- 2. Reflect on, and determine, what has been tried and found to be effective with similar performance problems.
- 3. Develop a plan which clearly identifies what the new officer is expected to accomplish, under what conditions, within what time frame, and using what resources.
- 4. Implement the plan and evaluate its success. If the desired level of performance (goal) was not achieved, return to step one.

Consider using a Remedial Training Assignment Worksheet (Appendix VIII) when developing a remedial plan. Be sure to document the plan, the FTO's efforts, and the results.

Remedial Training Strategies

The following section is designed to assist FTOs in recognizing and correcting training deficiencies and/or performance problems. It describes some of the commonly reported trainee problems and offers strategies for resolving them. For any identified deficiency/problem, the types of remedial training strategies are limited only by imagination and feasibility; however, no training should be dangerous, demeaning, harassing, or expose the department to liability. Department policies, procedures, or safety standards must never be violated for the sake of training.

The following strategies can be appropriate for assisting trainees in gaining proficiency with items in the field training program guide or in designing written training plans.

Role Plays and Scenarios

These can be used for a variety of performance tasks. Care should be taken regarding the following:

- 1. All participants must be made aware that the situation is a training exercise, not an actual event.
- 2. No loaded weapons should ever be used in field training scenarios.

- 3. Notification of other potentially involved parties (i.e., dispatch, neighboring departments, patrol and/or field training supervisors, etc).
- 4. Choice of location (so as not to involve unknowing citizens or other officers).
- 5. Selection of role players who understand the win-win philosophy (If the trainees do it right, they win!).

Role Reversals

Similar to role plays, here the FTO reverses roles with the trainee. The trainee then watches the FTO perform a task in the same incorrect manner that the trainee did earlier. The trainee is then required to critique the FTO and offer suggestions for improvement.

Commentary Driving

The trainee is advised to maintain a running commentary of what is observed while operating the vehicle (in the case of Driving Skills) or while acting as either the driver or passenger (in the case of Patrol Observation and Orientation Skills).

When Driving Skills are being taught, the trainee's recitation should focus on street/traffic conditions, traffic control devices, and defensive driving information. When Patrol Observation is being taught, the trainee should direct his/her attention to people and things that would be of police interest. The intent of this training is to move the trainee from "looking" as a civilian to "seeing" as a police officer does. When Orientation Skills are being taught, the trainee provides a commentary of the: 1) direction of travel, 2) location by intersection, and 3) identification of landmarks.

Verbalization

This technique is useful for those trainees who routinely know what to do but once subjected to stressful situations are unable to perform the required task(s).

Trainees are instructed to talk out their thoughts. If they are en route to a call, they must describe the call to the FTO, tell how they will get there and, once there, what their actions will be. In this way, they must organize their thoughts and present them to the FTO in a clear and logical manner.

An important benefit for trainees from this exercise is not only the "putting in order" of their thoughts and actions but also the slowing of their thought processes and prevention of "overload." By having them "talk out" their thoughts,

their thinking will revert to a slower, more understandable pace. This process should have a calming effect and reduce stress.

Flash Cards

Having trainees make flash cards enhances the learning process by using more than one learning style. Flash cards are particularly effective with subjects such as Radio Codes, Orientation Skills, Vehicle or Criminal Statutes and Elements, and Spelling.

Spelling Quizzes

The FTO keeps track of words that are frequently misspelled. The trainee is provided a list of these words and advised a few days in advance of the quiz. If the trainee finds it helpful, he/she may wish to practice writing the words a number of times.

Self-Evaluations

This technique, especially valuable when the trainee has difficulty accepting feedback, entails having the trainee keep notes during the shift and complete a DOR at the end. The DOR should be labeled "Self-Evaluation." As with the FTO's evaluation, both parties review and compare their DORs at the end of the shift.

Directing Traffic

- 1. FTO draws diagrams for trainee to place self, flow of traffic, ideal locations for fire and medical response, etc.
- 2. Shut down an intersection and let trainee practice. Start with quiet intersections and build to busier.
- 3. Have trainee speak with other FTOs, traffic officer, etc.
- 4. Have trainee speak with fire and medical responders for their perspective(s).
- 5. Request assignments for these types of calls.

Traffic Stops

- 1. Role play, in a parking lot, using other FTOs and vehicles.
- 2. Videos
 - a. Professionally made.
 - b. Film trainees in action so they can watch themselves.
- 3. Have trainee speak/ride with a traffic officer, etc.
- 4. FTO draws diagram for the trainee to place self, vehicle positions, ideal locations for stop, etc
- 5. Use miniature cars for placement.
 - 6. Develop a checklist first written, then mental.
 - 7. Verbal and written quizzing on traffic codes and elements.
 - 8. Have trainee practice completing citations and warnings on copied blank forms.

Report Writing

- 1. Use report writing exercises.
- 2. Pull some good and bad reports as examples. Be sure to remove the author's name.
- 3. Interview detectives, instructors, attorneys, and judges as to what they think makes a good report.
- 4. Have trainee enroll in a writing class.
- 5. Have trainee obtain and read library books on the subject.
- 6. Develop checklist to include elements of crimes for the more common calls.
- 7. Suggest trainee purchase a speller.
- 8. Have trainee recite the elements of a crime and describe how the elements were accomplished and in what sequence.
- 9. Have trainee spend time working with an in-house expert or academy instructor.

DUI

- 1. Role reversal with FTO making actual stops and trainee doing the critique.
- 2. Role plays in a parking lot using other FTOs and vehicles.
- 3. Videos
 - a. Professionally made.
 - b. Film trainees in action so they can watch themselves.
 - c. Previous DUI arrests.
- 4. Interview DUI officers, instructors, and attorneys.
- 5. Review old DUI reports.
- 6. Review actual case law at library.
- 7. Have trainee ride with a traffic officer.
- 8. Develop a checklist for procedures and forms.

Courtroom Demeanor

- 1. Interview detectives, instructors, attorneys and judges as to what they think makes a good witness.
- 2. Have trainee observe a trial.
- 3. Conduct a mock trial.
- 4. Have trainee perform a courtroom role play, using one of his/her citations or arrests.

Investigative Procedures

- 1. Interview detectives, instructors, and attorneys as to what they think makes a good investigation.
- 2. Verbal and written quizzes on elements of crimes.
- 3. Have trainee spend some time with an I.D. technician.
- 4. Tour a crime laboratory.
- 5. Follow one of the trainee's cases through with the assigned detective.
- 6. Create a mock crime scene.

Felony Stops

- 1. Practice visualization techniques.
- 2. Role plays with trainee as officer and suspect, in daylight and darkness.
- 3. FTO draws diagrams for trainee to place self, vehicle positions, ideal locations for stop, etc.
- 4. Develop a checklist for verbal commands.

Domestic Disputes

- 1. Use models (dolls, playhouse, etc.) for placement.
- 2. Role play using other FTOs.
- 3. Interviews with victim's advocate or groups.
- 4. Attend an Order of Protection hearing.
- 5. Request assignments for these types of calls.

Orientation Skills

- 1. Give trainee a copy of a map that contains the streets but no names. Trainee fills in the names.
- 2. Verbal and written quizzes on the hundred blocks, landmarks, and other important locations.
- 3. Throughout shift ask trainee, "Where are we now?"
- 4. Give the trainee addresses, transparencies, and a marker. Have trainee trace the route to the location.
- 5. Have trainee obtain and study overhead maps from highway department or run maps from the fire department.
- 6. Demonstrate efficient ways to use the Thomas Guide, including checking the index.

Radio Procedures and Codes

- 1. Role plays
 - a. What is going on with other officers?
 - b. Sample sentences/codes.
 - c. Describe scenario. Ask trainee how to say it on the radio.
- 2. Obtain a tape recorder that you and the trainee use as a radio in role plays.
- 3. Have trainee speak in codes rather than plain text/English.
- 4. Assign trainee to a shift in Communications to work with a dispatcher. Have trainee log the codes and then decipher into plain text/English, turning in the final product.
- 5. Have trainee listen to a scanner.
- 6. Have trainee read all license plates phonetically.
- 7. Listen to old communications tapes.

Accident Investigation

- 1. Have trainee ride with an accident investigator.
- 2. Develop a checklist for steps in completing an accident report.
- 3. Review past reports and diagrams.
- 4. Create a scenario and have the trainee draw a diagram.
- 5. Request assignments for these types of calls.
- 6. Using crayon attached to the corners of a block, show tire skids, etc.
- 7. Visit driving track skid pan.
- 8. Observe an autopsy for occupant injuries, etc.
- 9. Visit a junkyard for damage estimates, etc.

Rapport with Citizens

- 1. Increase exposure to public.
 - a. Business contact card file.
 - b. Traffic stops.
 - c. Neighborhood watch and crime prevention meetings.
 - d. Front desk.
- 2. Have trainee spend a shift with a public information officer.
- 3. Role plays.
- 4. Videotape trainee's contacts. Have trainee review and critique performance.
- 5. Assign trainee to work with a department volunteer.

Total Confusion

- 1. Have trainee complete a self-evaluation.
- 2. Develop a flow chart of basic tasks.
- 3. Have trainee speak with and/or observe FTOs, sergeants, and/or staff psychologist.
- 4. Flash cards.
- 5. Read past case reports.
- 6. Role play simple tasks.
- 7. Have trainee list his/her perceptions of the job.

Summary

For remedial training strategies, always remember to:

- 1. Diagnose the true problem.
- 2. Provide feedback.
- 3. Use all the resources available.
- 4. Be creative.
- 5. Document the trainee's performance and your efforts. ■

